

# Student Support Team

## Newsletter

VOLUME III, ISSUE 3

NOVEMBER 2009

### DID YOU KNOW?

All states are required to report in the Annual Performance Report on the timeliness and accuracy of all data that is submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). This requirement includes state-wide data as well as Supervisory Union/District level data.

Source: 2007–2008 Vermont Part B Annual Performance Report, Indicator 20, page 75. Available on-line: [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_spед/data\\_reports\\_pubs.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_spед/data_reports_pubs.html)

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## Vermont Schools Acknowledged at First Annual PBS Celebration!

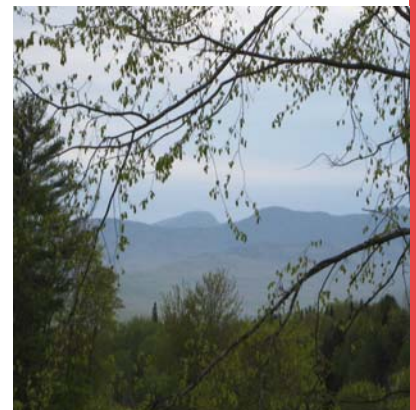
On September 29, 2009, at the Killington Grand Hotel, the Vermont BEST Team acknowledged schools across the state for implementing Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). PBS is a proactive, school-wide, systems approach to improving social and academic competence for all students. The PBS model emphasizes the importance of acknowledging students as well as adults. It was with this in mind that schools were honored as they continue to work toward positively impacting their school climate. In recognition of their good work, implementing schools received "School of Distinction" Banners and Ribbons. Schools also heard about sustaining PBS in their schools from Dr. George Sugai, Director of the Center for Behavioral Education & Research and Co-Director of the Center of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports at the University of Connecticut, and Dr. Robert Putnam, Senior Vice President of School Consultation at the May Institute.

Congratulations to the following schools:

Alburgh Community Ed Center	Hinesburg Comm. School	Putney Central School
Bakersfield Elem. School	Hyde Park Elem. School	Salisbury Community School
Barnet Elem. School	Integrated Arts Academy at H.O. Wheeler	Sheldon Elementary School
Barre City Elem. & Middle School	Isle La Motte Elem. School	St. Albans City Elem. School
Bennington Elem. School	Lakeview USD #43	SUCCESS School
Bingham Memorial School	Leland & Gray HSD #34	Swanton Schools
Bridport Central School	Miller's Run USD #37	Thatcher Brook Primary US #45
Burke Town School	Milton Elem. School	Troy Elementary School
Charlotte Central School	Molly Stark School	Vergennes UHS #5
Craftsbury Academy	Monkton Central School	Wardsboro Central School
Dothan Brook School	Monument Elem. School	Wilder School
Edmunds Elem. School	Mt. Abraham UHSD #28	Wolcott Elementary School
Flood Brook US #20	Missisquoi Valley UHSD #7	Woodbury Elementary School
Gateway School	Opportunities in Learning	
Hardwick Elem. School	Peoples Academy Middle Level	
Hazen UHS #26	Pownal Elem. School	

If you would like to learn more about PBS in Vermont go to [www.pbsvermont.org](http://www.pbsvermont.org)

~ Cassandra Corley, UVM, CDCI



## General Supervision Team Data Analysis and Reporting Team Update:

### Updated APR information-Post-Secondary Outcomes Survey for Students Exited in 2007– 2008 (Annual Performance Report Indicator 14):

Special thanks to the many members of the Student Support Team who have been assisting in making phone calls for this year's survey. We are finished making calls and anticipate preliminary results of the survey will be available in November. The final results will be published in the 2008 – 2009 Annual Performance Report on February 1, 2010.

### 2008 - 2009 Parent Involvement Survey (Annual Performance Report Indicator 8):

The survey vendor has completed all survey mailing and will be providing results back to the Student Support Team in November .

~ Dave Phillips & Mike Bailey

## Monitoring Team

The Focused Monitoring (FM) Team has been hard at work all summer...reviewing post secondary transition plans, reviewing and revising our 2009-2010 monitoring process and preparing for our verification visit from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) aka the "Feds"!

We are always looking for peers and parents to join our FM team out in the field. If you know of any peers (special educator, related service provider, general educator or administrator) who would be interested in participating on a visit, please let us know. We provide training, lodging, and we reimburse meals and mileage.

Similarly, we are searching for parents of children with disabilities to participate on our visits as well. The recruitment of parents continues to be a difficult task and while we are working with the Vermont Family Network, we still need parents to accompany the team on our on-site visits. Parents who participate receive training, a daily stipend, lodging and reimbursement for meals and mileage.

If you know of parents or peers who may be interested, please email Ernie, Troy and Alicia at [doe-monitoring@state.vt.us](mailto:doe-monitoring@state.vt.us).

As you may be aware, our FM Stakeholder Group selects our priority/ies for the coming year. We have ranked and selected Vermont's 60 supervisory unions/school districts based on the following indicators/priorities: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Drop Out, and school districts who did not make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) for children with disabilities. This year, our team will be visiting the Supervisory Unions/Districts listed in the table below.

~ Alicia Hanrahan



Back row left: Judy Colby, Ernie Wheeler, Troy McAllister, Front row left: Alicia Hanrahan, Mike Bailey, Dave Phillips and Doug Dows.

Supervisory Union	Dates of Visit	VTDOE Facilitator
Windham Northeast Supervisory Union	December 7-11, 2009	Troy McAllister
Barre Supervisory Union	January 11-15, 2010	Alicia Hanrahan
Washington South Supervisory Union	February 1-5, 2010	Ernie Wheeler
Hartford School District	March 8-12, 2010	Troy McAllister
Caledonia North Supervisory Union	April 5-9, 2010	Alicia Hanrahan
Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union	May 3-7, 2010	Ernie Wheeler

## Save the Date- Links to Training Opportunities with our Partners

**Vermont Department of Education**  
**Department of Education – Calendar of Events**  
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html>



### **University of Vermont—BEST**

**BEST: Building Effective Support For Teaching Students With Behavioral Challenges**

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/best/>

### **Training, Professional Development & Learning Opportunities Agency of Human Services**

**Many trainings, along with on-line registration, can be found at**  
<http://humanservices.vermont.gov/professional-development>

### **University of Vermont—I-Team**

**Literacy for All: How to Enhance Access to Literacy  
Learning for Students with Complex and Challenging  
Disabilities**

<http://www.uvm.edu/%7Ecdci/iteam/?Page=../workshops/workshops.html>

**AFB- American Foundation for the Blind**, offers 2009-2010 academic year scholarships for students who are legally blind. Contact: [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org) or Dawn Bodrogi, 212-502-7661.

### **Vermont Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

A nonprofit providing educational and support services for people with hearing loss and their communities in Vermont and the Connecticut River Valley.

<http://www.vcdhh.org>

Terry Keegan at 254-3929 or [tkeegan@vcdhh.org](mailto:tkeegan@vcdhh.org)

### **University of Vermont**

UVM courses and are taught online using Blackboard Register online at <http://www.uvm.edu/~rgweb/>

**New England Center Deafblind Project (NEC)** provides technical assistance to children who are deafblind. Training opportunities: <http://www.necdbp.org/events.htm>.

### **What Works: An Introductory Teacher Guide for Early Language and Emergent Literacy Instruction**

<http://www.familit.org/pdf/what-works.pdf>

The National Center for Family Literacy has published an introductory guide describing ways in which teachers can use research effectively for early language and emergent literacy instruction. is based on the report entitled [Developing Early Literacy: A Scientific Synthesis of Early Literacy Development and Implications for Intervention.](#)



A Photo from Adventure Day 2009

### **Linking Health & Learning e-Bulletin**

This monthly, electronic resource is intended to keep Vermont educators and youth-serving professionals up-to-date on news, resources, professional development and grant/funding opportunities related to healthy and safe schools. Issues are archived [here](#). To subscribe to the e-mail list serve write to [lindsay.simpson@state.vt.us](mailto:lindsay.simpson@state.vt.us)

## Hospitalized Students: Brattleboro Retreat Change

**School districts are responsible to determine what educational services are to be offered and to pay for educational services offered to hospitalized students.**

We have found there is a need for more communication to and direction from the school district about when and what services to provide within our state board rules 1252 and 2364.2. This change is effective July 1, 2009.

In general, hospitalized students at the Brattleboro Retreat remain the educational and financial responsibility of the district they were living in prior to hospitalization. For residentially placed students who are hospitalized, the LEA of record is required to determine what educational services are to be offered and when in accordance with state board rules and, for special education students, in accordance with the student's IEP. Previously we erroneously considered these student's "state placed".

The rules governing general education students require tutorial services after 10 consecutive days missed of school due to medical disability. You should begin counting from the last day of school attended prior to hospitalization. So, if your general education student was out for a week before hospitalization, they would be entitled to tutorial after missing 5 school days in the hospital. It is an LEA responsibility to offer services once this requirement has been met and to either coordinate services with the Brattleboro Retreat Meadows School to provide the necessary services, or to send a tutor.

There is a chart below for your reference that helps explain LEA responsibility, and potential forms of reimbursement or claiming.

~ **Mike Mulcahy, Interagency Coordinator**

<b>Placement Prior to Psychiatric or other Hospitalization</b>	<b>LEA oversight</b>	<b>Counting Students Claiming Special Education Reimbursement</b>	<b>Person Responsible to respond to hospital notification of student placement</b>
<b>Resident Student</b>	Town of residence	ADM  Formula-for special education services	General Education students-Principal  Special Education students- special education case manager/ or person assigned for summer
<b>State Placed Student</b>	School attended prior to hospitalization	State Placed ADM -  Worksheet A- special education services	General Education students-Principal  Special Education students- special education case manager/ or person assigned for summer
<b>State Placed in a Residential Program</b>	Town of residence  <b>Exception:</b> If school attended prior to hospitalization was <b>Valley Vista</b> –LEA is school attended prior to Valley Vista placement	ADM & Formula for special education services delivered to resident student per IEP  SPS ADM & Worksheet A for Special Education services if the student was state placed prior to Valley Vista Placement	General Education students-Principal  Special Education students- special education case manager/ or person assigned for summer

## Medicaid IEP and Evaluation Rate Updated

The Department of Education recently collected a survey of the time spent completing Medicaid allowable activities associated with the development of an IEP and the tri-annual special education reevaluation. Based on the information provided, the following rates have been approved by the Office of Vermont Health Access:

IEP claims (blue forms) \$422

Evaluation claim (pink forms) \$743

These rates are effective for dates of service 9/1/09 and later. IEP and Evaluation claims can now be submitted to Medicaid.

If you have any questions please contact me at 828-5111 or [nicole.tousignant@state.vt.us](mailto:nicole.tousignant@state.vt.us)

~ Nicole Tousignant,  
Medicaid Program Coordinator

## Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Prevention

The Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Prevention Team of the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has announced: **CDC's new FASD website!**

We've been working hard to create a research-based site that is user-friendly, up-to-date, and appealing.

Some of the new features of the site include:

- State alcohol consumption data for 2008
- A video called, "The Story of Iyal." It gives an inside look at one family living with FASDs. This video is also featured at <http://www.cdc.gov>

- Easy-to-read information on diagnosis and treatments for children with FASDs
- Individualized pages for different visitors - women, families, healthcare providers, educators, and partners
- Updated information on CDC activities

Please help spread the word by linking your website to ours. We've created an easy-to-use linking graphic and description. It can be found on the "Partners" page:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/partners.html>

Visit our site: [www.cdc.gov/fasd](http://www.cdc.gov/fasd)





## RESOURCES

### Scientifically Based Education Resources

The Access Center (K-8)

<http://www.k8accesscenter.org>

Research in Special Education: Scientific Methods and Evidence-Based Practices

[ideapractices.org/ps/Final\\_Manuscript-Scientific\\_Research\\_in\\_Special\\_Education\\_R3.pdf](http://ideapractices.org/ps/Final_Manuscript-Scientific_Research_in_Special_Education_R3.pdf)

National Center on Positive Behavioral

Interventions and Supports website—<http://www.pbis.org>

The Florida Center for Reading Research

<http://www.fcrr.org>

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities Research Center website at

<http://research.nichcy.org>

Resources supporting Progress Monitoring Research:

The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring information can be accessed at:

<http://www.studentprogress.org>

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has funded the Research Institute on Progress Monitoring to develop a system of progress monitoring to evaluate effects of individualized instruction on access to and progress within the general education curriculum.

<http://www.progressmonitoring.org>

National Research Center on Learning Disabilities

This resource includes a learning disabilities resource kit on determination procedures and Rtl. <http://www.nrcdd.org>

The Center on Instruction provides information on scientifically based research and information on K-12 instruction in reading, math, science, special education, and English language learning. <http://www.centeroninstruction.org>

The Institute of Education Achievement at the University of Oregon has continuously updated research on scientifically-based instructional practices. <http://www.idea.uoregon.edu>

The IRIS Center, funded by the U.S Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), creates course enhancement materials for college faculty who teach pre-service personnel and for professional development trainers who conduct in-service trainings. The Web site materials are designed to better prepare professionals to work with students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu>

Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL)

<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/>

### The Website for the Stern Center :

<http://www.sterncenter.org/>

<http://www.getATstuff.com> is an online “classifieds” where you can find new and used **Assistive Technology (AT)** devices for sale or donation. Residents of Vermont & all of New England can post an AT or purchase an AT.

### Center for Implementing Technology in Education

<http://www.CITEd.org>

See the Online Events page on **SchoolsMovingUp** for future training events at <http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/onlineevents>

### Vermont Department of Education

<http://education.vermont.gov/>

The **regional school calendar summary** for 2008-2009 has been posted on the Department's Web site --

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/directories/school\\_calendars\\_09.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/directories/school_calendars_09.html)

If you need information about **human services**, log onto <http://www.screendoor.vermont.gov> or call 211

### Weekly Field Memo is Now Online!

The DOE Weekly Field Memo is on the Department of Education web site at

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/field\\_memo.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/field_memo.html)

Field Memos and the corresponding attachments are available for download. For Field Memo information three months or older, please contact Jill Remick, 828-3154 or

[jill.remick@state.vt.us](mailto:jill.remick@state.vt.us). Weekly Field Memo items in **RED** indicate a legal requirement

### New Resources from OSEP

The US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has announced a new addition to the *OSEP Tool Kit on Teaching and Assessing Students With Disabilities (Tool Kit)*. As reported by Judy L. Shanley, Ph.D., Education Program Specialist; "The *Tool Kit* addendum focuses on universal design for learning (UDL). UDL is a framework for designing educational environments that help students engage in learning to increase knowledge and skills. The *Tool Kit* includes information and resources to support the implementation of UDL and is useful for policymakers, education personnel and parents to implement UDL strategies and practices. This new addition is available at <http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/> and CDs will be available shortly through ED Pubs <http://edpubs.ed.gov/>

## New Resources

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) released a new report, *A New Era in Education: Redefining the Federal Role for the 21st Century*. The paper recommends a different role for the federal government in education, including some recommendations for the new President and his education team. Additionally, the paper identifies where the federal government must immediately direct its emphasis and involvement pending the transition to this new federal role in leading the national effort to define and develop a consensus on a 21st century education. To download the report, go to:

<http://www.nsba.org/MainMenu/Advocacy/FederalRole.aspx>

- NSBA has also released a new report on AYP. The report, *An Analysis of State AYP Results for 2007-08*, can be downloaded from:

<http://www.nsba.org/MainMenu/Advocacy/FederalLaws/NCLB/AYPAnalysis.aspx>

- The Center on Education Policy (CEP) released a new report that examines how classroom practices have been influenced by NCLB and related state policies in Rhode Island. Drawn from classroom observations and interviews, the report sheds new light on how teachers, principals, and administrators have responded to the federal school accountability law. The report, *Lessons from the Classroom Level: Federal and State Accountability in Rhode Island*, found that the high-performing schools in the study and their school districts seemed to have the greatest alignment between curriculum and state standards. Teachers and administrators interviewed for the study acknowledged pressure to “teach to the test” by focusing on specific content or skills included on the state test. The report can be downloaded from the CEP website at <http://www.cep-dc.org> under “What’s New.”

- Washington DC’s public television station, WETA, operates a number of websites that provide helpful information to parents, teachers and other school personnel. These include:

1. <http://www.LDOnLine.org> - LD OnLine provides accurate information about learning disabilities and ADHD to over 200,000 people each month. The site features hundreds of helpful articles, multimedia, first-person essays, and children’s writing and artwork. Monthly advice columns by noted experts, active forums, a comprehensive resource directory, and a Yellow Pages referral directory help parents, teachers, and people with learning disabilities decide what to do.

2. <http://www.ReadingRockets.org> - ReadingRockets.org is a national multimedia project that looks at how young children learn to read, why so many struggle, and what we can do to help them. The website includes an archive of articles, professional development webcasts, interviews with children’s authors, a daily headline service, two blogs, and much more. ReadingRockets.org also encompasses television programs produced for PBS, including *A Tale of Two Schools* and the *Launching Young Readers* series.

3. <http://www.AdLit.org> - AdLit.org is a national multimedia project that offers resources for parents and educators of struggling readers and writers in grades 4-12. The site includes research-based articles, instructional material for classroom teachers, an Ask the Experts feature, blogs by a librarian and children’s book reviewer, tips for parents, recommendations, exclusive interviews with top authors, and a free monthly e-newsletter.

4. <http://www.ColorinColorado.org> - ColorinColorado.org is an award-winning bilingual website for parents and educators of English language learners. The website offers Spanish-speaking parents a wealth of information in their native language and gives teachers the information they need to be more effective in working with children for whom English is a second language.

5. <http://www.BrainLine.org> - BrainLine.org is a national multimedia project that provides information and resources on preventing, treating, and living with traumatic brain injury. The site includes a series of webcasts, an electronic newsletter, and an extensive outreach campaign. BrainLine.org serves anyone whose life has been affected by TBI: people with brain injury, their families, professionals in the field, and anyone else in a position to help prevent or ameliorate the toll of TBI.

6. <http://www.LearningStore.org> - LearningStore.org offers educational videos, books, and software for teachers, parents, and kids. All products are carefully reviewed by education experts.

7. <http://www.familit.org/pdf/what-works.pdf>

The National Center for Family Literacy has published an introductory guide describing ways in which teachers can use research effectively for early language and emergent literacy instruction. The guide is based on the report entitled [Developing Early Literacy: A Scientific Synthesis of Early Literacy Development and Implications for Intervention](#)



## **Inclusion in Vermont**

### **Where Have We Come From and Where are We Going?**

#### **PART I**

It seems strange to be writing an article on inclusion in Vermont in 2009. Inclusion was an intense topic of conversation in Vermont schools and communities in the late 1980's and early 1990's. After being crowned the "most inclusive state in the nation" for a number of years, the topic of inclusion dropped down the list of educational priorities in Vermont. For the past few years we have lost the title of "most inclusive" and actually the numbers of students being educated outside of their general education classrooms is increasing each year. What has changed? Are we less committed to including all children and youth in our schools? Have the students changed? Have the teachers changed? Has our direction changed? Perhaps it is time to review where we have been and to reflect on where we want to go.

Some Vermont schools began movement towards including all of their children in their local schools before the term "inclusion" was coined. From 1983 to 1986 UVM had a federal grant called the Homecoming Project. Over the three year project, 26 schools from Franklin NW SU, Franklin Central SU, Grand Isle SU and Franklin West SU, returned 58 students from regional special class programs to age-appropriate general education classes in their local schools. An additional 19 students who were at risk of being placed in self-contained classrooms were maintained in general education classes in their local schools. A total of 77 students benefited from the project and the project became the first district-wide demonstration of "inclusion" anywhere.

In the early 1990's UVM had a Federal Outreach grant that was funded for 6 years to export our model of inclusion to schools across the country. During that time span school teams (including principals, parents of students with severe disabilities, general education teachers, special educators, related services providers and faculty members of colleges

and universities identified to support the teams when they returned home) came to Vermont for a week-long institute. Teams developed an inclusion plan for their student with the support of a Vermont facilitator, who led them through the planning process. Teams also heard from Vermont educators, parents and administrators who were successfully including students and had the opportunity to see inclusion in action while visiting Vermont schools. Schools from Nevada, Alaska, South Carolina, New York, Idaho, California, Texas, Montana and the Republic of Palau learned about inclusion here in Vermont.

During that same time period, UVM developed a graduate program (with the help of another Federal grant) to train Inclusion Facilitators. A new role in our schools was identified and special educators were trained to fulfill that role. As time went on our focus changed to more pressing priorities and educational spending became an issue. Gradually, inclusion facilitators went back to being special educators with larger caseloads. The training program at UVM was no longer provided with Federal funds to support students, so it too ended. We lost focus and resources at a time when we needed both.

So in 2009, what is an inclusive school? According to the Inclusive Schools Network <http://www.inclusiveschools.org> inclusive schools are built on the strong philosophical belief that all children can learn and be successful within a shared academic environment. Culturally responsive educational strategies, differentiated instruction and positive behavioral supports are some of the inclusive practices that are evident in academic and non-academic settings within the school. Inclusive schools offer all students opportunities and support that will allow them to become self-determined, productive, and socially involved citizens.





## **Inclusion in Vermont Where Have We Come From and Where are We Going? PART I continued**

Inclusive schools are on a perpetual journey toward becoming and maintaining a society where children and youth are not marginalized due to disability, gender, socio-economic status, cultural heritage, language preference or religion. Each child who enters an inclusive school presents new challenges and opportunities for the whole school community.

Inclusive schools are places where:

- **Children and young adults** of all abilities, cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, languages, genders and religions share a learning environment that builds upon their strengths and supports their diverse needs.
- **Faculty and Administration** work collaboratively amongst themselves and with families to ensure that all students are learning and thriving.
- **Families** feel valued and are empowered to participate in their child's education.

- **Communities** surrounding the school embrace the principles of inclusion among their citizens. (Inclusive Schools Network, 2009)

This describes many schools in Vermont. Does it describe your school? Should it describe your school? Is the philosophy of Inclusion alive in Vermont?

Next Month: Benefits of Inclusive Schools

The Following Month: Tips for Inclusive Schools

~ **Tim Fox**  
**VT State I-Team, Education Consultant**

## **I-Team Referral Process**

Because IEP team membership and the student's and family's needs change annually, a new referral form must be completed for each student each school year. Remember to obtain both the administrator's signature and the family's signature.

Please ensure that the student's family is given the family letter and has the opportunity to provide input on the referral form. The IEP team is then responsible for keeping the family informed of all I-Team visits. Family members are always welcome and encouraged to be present when I-Team members visit the school.

Once you are sure that all the information is complete, please make a photocopy of the completed referral form for the student's file. Then mail the original referral form to

Louise Lynch at our main office in Burlington. Louise will record the referral and forward it to the appropriate Regional Educational Consultant and Family Resources Consultant for your school. Also remember to include the student's current IEP and any relevant evaluation reports. If you have any questions, please contact Louise or Tim Fox, the I-Team Coordinator.

Web link:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/iteam/?Page=referral.html>

## ***“I didn't realize the severity of it.”***

The incidents of bullying and harassment remain quite serious in a number of school situations and merit attention to prevent an escalation of violence and harm. "Restorative practices" is one approach that I'm finding to be quite useful.

### **WHAT IS RESTORATIVE PRACTICES?**

***“Restorative practices” is an emerging field of study that enables people to restore and build community in an increasingly disconnected world.***

The emerging *transdisciplinary* field of "**restorative practices (RP)**" offers a common thread to tie together theory, research and practice in seemingly disparate fields, such as education, counseling, criminal justice, social work and organizational management.

The **restorative practices** concept has its roots in "*restorative justice*," a new way of looking at criminal justice that focuses on repairing the harm done to people and relationships rather than on punishing offenders (*although restorative justice does not preclude incarceration of offenders or other sanctions*). Originating in the **1970s** as mediation between victims and offenders, in the **1990s** restorative justice broadened to include communities of care as well, with victims' and offenders' families and friends participating in collaborative processes called "**conferences**" and "**circles**." (For a useful summary of restorative justice theory, go to <http://www.realjustice.org/library/paradigm.html>.)

For the last decade the **International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP)**, which grew out of the **Real Justice program** (see <http://www.realjustice.org>), has been developing a comprehensive framework for practice and theory that expands the **restorative paradigm** beyond its origins in criminal justice (McCold and Wachtel, 2003).

The *fundamental unifying hypothesis* of **restorative practices** is disarmingly simple: that human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things **WITH** them, rather than **TO** them or **FOR** them. This *hypothesis* maintains that the punitive and authoritarian **TO mode** and the permissive and paternalistic **FOR mode** are not as effective as the restorative, participatory, engaging **WITH mode**. If this **restorative hypothesis** is valid, then it has significant implications for many disciplines.

It was at a monthly **Vermont School Crisis Planning Team (VSCPT)** meeting in Waterbury, Vermont, that "**restorative practices (RP)**" was introduced as an

effective approach for *reactively* as well *proactively* nurturing a sustainable safe schools culture.

The racial harassment incident that sparked creating the *Brattleboro Racial Issues Steering Committee* sheds light on the potential value of using this tool. The news story from **The Commons** ... "**I didn't realize the severity of it**" ... started when I initiated a call to L. P. and went to his home, while he was on house arrest, and asked him ... "*what happened?*" He had been suspended from school ("**zero tolerance**"), and as of that moment no substantial action was in motion to have him return to school. A number of *ad hoc* steps were taken to create conditions toward a resolution of this disturbing set of circumstances. There's still a need for an effective, (*21st century*), framework, and mechanism to interact with the invariable incidents that continue to happen at school.

The **Commons** article "**I didn't realize the severity of it**" ... concludes with the quote: "*Moving forward as an adult means fully realizing the impact of his words and the racial controversies of last year, which “made me feel like a piece of s\*\*\*,” L.P. says. The turning points seen here deepen ones appreciation for “practice” (similar to music, dance and sports, etc.) as a way to enrich real-time choice options for everyone involved.*

The proactive and reactive questions of "*restorative practices*" require substantial education, training, and practice to enhance our capacity to reach beyond ... "**I didn't realize the severity of it**":

### **RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS**

#### **PROACTIVE — REACTIVE**

***What am I doing? What happened?***

***What am I (feeling) thinking? What were you thinking (feeling) at the time?***

***What is the affect of what I'm doing? What has been affected by what you have done?***

***What am I creating? What do you need to do to make things right?***

I encouraged the **International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP)** to offer two conferences in Vermont - <http://www.iirp.org>:

~ Charles Johnson,

## ***Positive Behavior Supports: What is Going on in Vermont?***

The 2009 BEST Summer Institute, held this past June 20-24 in Killington, was the largest event in the history of the Vermont BEST Team! Over 430 participants from 56 school teams attended this four-day learning opportunity to share and learn strategies for improving and strengthening the complex educational supports and systems that are essential in our schools and communities. Participants learned about new programs, curricula, practices and activities that emphasize positive, research-based strategies and supports for all of our students. While the BEST Team was challenged by the high number of participants, the Institute was once again considered a huge success. As noted by one participant - "With an increase in attendance and people on the waiting list, I felt, as always, that the BEST folks pulled out another good conference this year!"

Of particular note were the 27 school teams in attendance whose focus was the development of Positive Behavior Supports Action Plans at the Universal or Targeted levels. These teams followed a logical framework to create systems, data and practices that both enhance school climate and prevent behavior problems while increasing access to learning.

As noted by another 2009 BEST Summer Institute Participant - "The whole institute was excellent and inspirational. I'm sure we're on our way to a better school year."

~ Sherry Schoenberg, UVM, CDCI



Crisis Prevention Institute  
Nonviolent CI Instructor Training  
Capitol Plaza, Montpelier January 5-8, 2010 8:00-4:30

Who should attend? Participants attending this training must be endorsed by the Superintendent of Schools. Individuals selected by the supervisory union should be carefully considered around the following characteristics: Strong professional attitude or empathy and compassion, knowledge and understanding of best practices in managing challenging behaviors, physical and verbal competency and strong presentation skills.

**FEE:** \$1,150.00 per person Questions? Contact Sherry Schoenberg at [sherscho@sover.net](mailto:sherscho@sover.net) or at 656-9656

**Registration:**

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/best/?Page=calendarTA0708.html>



## ***An Introductory Forum on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS)***

On Wednesday, September 30, 2009 the Vermont BEST Team presented *An Introductory Forum on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS)* at the Killington Grand Hotel. This learning opportunity was designed for individuals and schools who are exploring PBS and possible school-wide implementation for Fall 2010. They had the opportunity to learn more about PBS through national expert Dr. George Sugai of the University of Connecticut, hear from Vermont educator Donna Cauley on her experience implementing PBS at Bennington Elementary, and learn about the Vermont PBS Readiness process.

Thirty-five schools were in attendance from all regions of Vermont ranging from the elementary to high school level. Currently, nearly 60 schools are implementing PBS throughout Vermont. We expect to see that number continue to grow as schools hear about the positive impact PBS has had on Vermont schools.

~ Josh Souliere

## Communication Corner

### **Bev Heise, Educational Support**

Bev worked for the Department of Education 9 years; she retired in August. We will miss Bev and hope she is enjoying retirement!



### **Janna Osman, Education Consultant**

Janna worked for the Department of Education 8 years; she is now the Program Director for Professional Learning at the Stern Center. We miss Janna and hope she is enjoying her new adventure in her career.



An empowered organization is one in which individuals have the knowledge, skill, desire and opportunity to personally succeed in a way that leads to collective organizational success.  
~Stephen Covey, Principle-center Leadership

### **Judy Colby, Administrative Assistant**

Judy has worked for the Department of Education 9 years; she is now working for the Blue Mountain Supervisory Union. We will miss Judy and we know that Blue Mountain SU is lucky to have her!



### **Rae Ann Knopf, Assistant Division Director for the Student Support Team**

Rae Ann has worked for the Department of Education 3 years; she is now the Vermont Department of Education, Deputy Commissioner *Education Transformation & Innovation*. Congratulations, Rae Ann!

